

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 8, 13-18, and 29-30 and amend claims 1-6, 10-12, 19-26 and 28 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An unpowered apparatus comprising:
a flexible material having low permeability to a lighter than air gas, the flexible material defining a chamber;
at least one structural member coupled to the flexible material such that when the chamber is filled with the gas to a known level, the apparatus is substantially neutrally buoyant under ambient conditions; ~~and~~
a valve to seal the chamber to maintain the known level during use; and
a sleeve associated with the flexible material to retain the at least one structural member.
2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 ~~further comprising:~~
~~a sleeve coupled to the flexible material to retain the at least one structural member,~~
wherein the sleeve is integral with the flexible material.
3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 2 1, wherein the structural member defines at least a portion of a shape of the chamber.
4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 2 1, wherein the sleeve is heat welded to the flexible material.
5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 2 1, wherein the sleeve and the flexible material are a same material.
6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:
a flexible material having low permeability to a lighter than air gas, the flexible material defining a chamber;

at least one structural member ~~coupled to~~ associated with the flexible material such that when the chamber is filled with the gas to a known level, the apparatus is substantially neutrally buoyant under ambient conditions; and

a plurality of flexible strips ~~coupled to~~ heat welded to the flexible material to retain at least one structural member adjacent to the flexible material.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the structural member defines at least a portion of a shape of the chamber.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the flexible strips and the flexible material are a same material.

10. (Currently Amended) An unpowered apparatus comprising:
a flexible material having low permeability to a lighter than air gas, the flexible material defining a chamber; and

at least one structural member ~~coupled to~~ associated with the flexible material, said structural member having a defined weight such that when the chamber is filled with the gas to a known level, the weight of said structural member counteracts a lift caused by said gas, such that said apparatus is substantially neutrally buoyant under ambient conditions; and
a sleeve associated with the flexible material to retain the at least one structural member.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10 ~~further comprising:~~
~~a sleeve coupled to the flexible material to retain the at least one structural member,~~
wherein the sleeve is integral with the flexible material.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An apparatus of claim 11, comprising:

a flexible material having low permeability to a lighter than air gas, the flexible material defining a chamber;

at least one structural member associated with the flexible material, wherein the structural member defines at least a portion of a shape of the chamber-, said structural member having a defined weight such that when the chamber is filled with the gas to a known level, the weight of said structural member counteracts a lift caused by said gas, such that said apparatus is substantially neutrally buoyant under ambient conditions.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a flexible material having low permeability to a lighter than air gas, the flexible material defining a chamber; and

at least one structural member ~~coupled to~~ associated with the flexible material, wherein said structural member is less flexible than said flexible material for maintaining a desired shape of the apparatus-; and

a sleeve associated with the flexible material to retain the at least one structural member.

20. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 19 ~~further comprising:~~

~~a sleeve coupled to the flexible material to retain the at least one structural member,~~
wherein the sleeve is integral with the flexible material.

21. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 20 19, wherein the sleeve is heat welded to the flexible material.

22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 20 19, wherein the sleeve and the flexible material are a same material.

23. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:
a flexible material having low permeability to a lighter than air gas, the flexible material defining a chamber; and

~~at least one structural member having opposed ends, wherein said ends are connected to each other, said structural member defined about a perimeter of said flexible material; and~~

at least one strip ~~coupled to~~ associated with the flexible material to retain at least one structural member adjacent to the flexible material; ~~and~~

at least one structural member having opposed ends and a body extending therebetween, wherein an end of the structural member is fed through the strip and the ends are connected to each other.

24. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein said strip is a sleeve ~~coupled to~~ associated with the flexible material to retain the at least one structural member.

25. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:
a flexible material having low permeability to a lighter than air gas, the flexible material defining a chamber; and

at least one structural member that is formed of a different material from that of the flexible material and is ~~coupled to~~ associated with the flexible material such that when the

chamber is filled with the gas to a known level, the apparatus is substantially neutrally buoyant under ambient conditions; and

a sleeve associated with the flexible material to retain the at least one structural member.

26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 25 ~~further comprising:~~
~~a sleeve coupled to the flexible material to retain the at least one structural member,~~
wherein the sleeve is integral with the flexible material.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the structural member defines at least a portion of a shape of the chamber.

28. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~26~~ 25, wherein the sleeve is heat welded to the flexible material.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Canceled)